

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand. (1) the land lines I use for my home phone are 50+ years old. The lines are lead, insulated with paper (hello!!), and the rubber exterior has 50+ years of being chewed by squirrels, drying heat from the sun, frozen by ice in winter, and beaten by driving winds and rain. When it rains, water seeps into the cracked rubber, soaks the paper insulation and I have no phone service -- for days or until it dries out. SBC tells the Public Utility Commission that they have replaced the line, but what Bell means is they replaced the most obvious cracked SECTIONS -- not the entire line. But Bell charges me as if their service is top-notch. (2) Just recently AT&T gave the home # I have had for 30+ years to another consumer and it took months to get that mess straighten out -- the whole time the Bell companies denying being the source of the problems. I literally had a "party line" and received calls for that consumer at my home. They were college students --popular folks. (3) I think telephone services should be free. I think any telephone company should be embarrassed to charge people for causing more problems in their lives.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.